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Queenston Heights

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Cruikshank

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W. E. Corman
Stoney Creek

BATTLE OF QUEENSTON HEIGHTS.

BY ERNEST CRUIKSHANK.

From W. E. CORMAN,
RIFLE RANGE FARM,
Stoney Creek, Ont.

Lundy's Lane Historical Society.

QUEENSTON HEIGHTS.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE OF THE FAMOUS BATTLE WHERE GENERAL BROCK DIED DEFENDING HIS COUNTRY.

BY ERNEST CRUIKSHANK.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT DRUMMONDVILLE, ONT., DEC. 18, 1889.

PRICE 10 CENTS.

WELLAND:

PRINTED BY W. T. SAWLE & CO., TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

1890.

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BATTLE OF QUEENSTON HEIGHTS.

[BY ERNEST CRUIKSHANK.]

Most Canadians are sufficiently familiar with the stately column which crowns the summit of Queenston Heights, and looks down upon an expanse of scenery which can scarcely be paralleled for variety and sublimity, save by the view from the edge of the plateau, on which an obelisk marks the spot where "Wolfe died victorious." Most of them know, also, in a general way, why it was placed there, and that Brock died to preserve what Wolfe had died to conquer.

It is not necessary to trace the march of events immediately succeeding the declaration of war by the United States, on the 18th of June, 1812; how Brock cheered up the despondent, decided the wavering, and over-awed the disloyal among the inhabitants of the province by a settled policy, to use his own words, of "speaking loud and looking big;" how, prevented by the express instructions of his superior from attacking the enemy beyond the Niagara, he assembled an enthusiastic body of volunteers, and taking with him almost every regular soldier at his disposal, flew to repel the invader at the Detroit; how he promptly determined to cross that river contrary to the opinion of his most trusted officers; and how his audacity was rewarded by a complete and bloodless victory, is tolerably well known to every Canadian.

But, while conquering at Detroit, he could not fail to be apprehensive that disaster might have befallen the weakened garrisons on the Niagara, and scarcely twenty-four hours were permitted to elapse before he was on his way thither, carrying with him all the troops that had accompanied or preceded him from that quarter, fully alive to the truth of the Napoleonic maxim that "in war-time is everything." Brock hoped to duplicate his exploit by the capture of Fort Niagara and the dispersal of the forces assembled on that frontier. That it would have been an easy task, there can now be no reasonable doubt, although superior in numbers, the American troops there were, by the admission of their commanders, in a very indifferent state of discipline, without any heavier ordnance than six pounders, and but few of them, and without artillerists. A few days later, when the true extent of Brock's success was made known, their demoralization became complete. The most absurd rumors were believed and spread. Fugitives from Detroit, anxious to excuse their cowardice, gravely related that a hundred fresh scalps had been deposited at Elliott's feet, and that he had paid for them at the rate of six dollars each. Not only the Western Indians, but those residing in Michigan and Canada were said to have taken the hatchet, and to be already on their way to devastate the border settlements of Ohio. The appearance of two British war-vessels on the south coast of Lake Erie threw the inhabitants of Chautauqua county into a paroxysm of terror. Fearful memories of Cherry Valley and Wyoming were recalled, and a general flight began. The militia became clamorous for pay, and sought furloughs under every possible pretext. When refused they feigned sickness or deserted.

The intensity of Brock's disappointment may be imagined when he learned, on his arrival at Fort Erie, on the 22nd of August, that an armistice had been proclaimed five days before. Persistently hoping against hope that peace might be established without bloodshed, the Governor-General of

Canada, as soon as he was informed of the repeal of the obnoxious orders in council assigned by the American government as the chief cause of their declaration of war, dispatched his Adjutant-General, Colonel Baynes, to General Dearborn, commander of the United States forces in the state of New York, who had his headquarters at Green Bush, near Albany, to propose a cessation of hostilities till the decision of the cabinet could be ascertained. He found Dearborn in a favorable humor. He had indeed been vaguely instructed to make a diversion in favor of General Hull upon the Niagara, but was in no position to assume the offensive there or elsewhere at that moment. Most of the American merchant vessels on Lake Ontario were blockaded at Ogdensburg. Sackett's Harbor, his principal naval station on that lake, was nearly defenceless, and had been threatened with an attack; the forces assembled on the Niagara were unprovided with artillery and necessary munitions of war. He readily assented to Baynes, proposals as far as the forces under his immediate command were concerned, as he could still continue his preparations for defence and invasion with entire freedom. But Hull was believed to be in full tide of success. It was confidently reported that he had taken Malden and was marching up the Thames. Dearborn therefore warily declined to extend the armistice to his operations.

General Van Rensselaer, who commanded the American forces on the Niagara, received the news with feelings of relief and satisfaction. Although refugees from Canada had assured him nearly a week before, that all the regular troops had been withdrawn from the posts opposite to meet General Hull, he still remained incredulous and apprehensive of an attack. Yet his force already exceeded two thousand men, of whom one-half were regulars. He perceived in an instant what an immense advantage might be derived from the cessation of hostilities, if the terms could be construed in such a way as to enable him to bring up troops and stores from Oswego and Sacketts Harbor, by water instead of by the tedious overland route. Unless this concession were secured the armistice would be of little immediate benefit to him. The agreement was so loosely worded as to leave this matter in doubt. His Adjutant-General was at once sent to Fort George with directions to insist on this interpretation.

Colonel Christopher Myers had been left in command there by General Brock To garrison all the posts, he had less than three hundred men of the 41st regiment The absentees of the flank companies of the Lincoln militia were called in and increased the number of militia in service to about four hundred. The remainder of the inhabitants were busily engaged in the harvest fields, but an additional draft of five hundred men were warned to hold themselves in readiness to march to his support. The two armed vessels, Prince Regent and Earl Moiza, were moored in the mouth of the river to protect his left flank, while the new schooner, Lady Prevost, was anchored off Fort Erie to assist in the defence of that post. Efforts to strengthen the fortifications along the entire line were continued as far as his means would permit. A day or two before the armistice was announced, Colonel Roger Sheaffe of the 49th, arrived and assumed command. Letters recently received from Prevost insisted on the policy of conciliating the enemy by every means in his power, and Sheafle finally consented that both parties should enjoy the unrestricted navigation of Lake Ontario as long as the armistice continued, although an express from Detroit had informed him a few minutes before of the capitulation of the entire American army there.

All the advantages secured so far by the superiority of the British squadron on Lake Ontario were thrown away by a stroke of the pen. The blockaded vessels at Ogdensburg were removed to Sackett's Harbor to be armed, and troops and stores of all kinds hurried forward to Fort Niagara. Tidings of Brock's almost incredible success had preceded him, and as he rode down to Niagara he was met midway by many of the magistrates and principal inhabitants on horseback, who presented him with a congratulatory address, to which he replied with his characteristic readiness and tact, quietly disclaiming any personal credit, and ascribing his triumph to the fidelity and alacrity with which he had been supported by the people of the province and the steadiness of the troops under his command. The volunteers that had accompanied him were filled with natural exultation, and their easy victory had inspired them with a certain amount of contempt for their enemies, which was rapidly communicated to their friends and acquaintances. The arrival of the American general and the regulars of his army, a few days later, became the signal for a frantic outburst of enthusiasm, and aged loyalists who still nourished bitter memories of the Revolution, proclaimed that Saratoga had been at last avenged.

Quite as profound was the dismay occasioned in the minds of even the most san-

guine of his antagonists. "Three days ago," wrote Peter B. Porter, their quarter-master-general, to the Governor of New York, "the heroes of Tippecanoe and the garrisons of Detroit and Mackinac, amounting to about 500, were marched like cattle from Fort Erie to Fort George, guarded by General Brock's regular troops with all the parade and pomp of British insolence, and we were incapacitated by the armistice and our own weakness from giving them the relief they anxiously seemed to expect. With 4000 men on this river, the whole of Upper Canada and the Indian country would have been in our possession Now, Detroit and a brave army taken, the Indians let loose upon our frontiers, the inhabitants flying in every direction. Brock with his army and Indians and thousands of inspirited Canadians, and a powerful train of field and garrison artillery taken at Detroit arrived on this frontier and ready to act. Indeed it is now reduced to a certainty that the inhabitants of this frontier are doomed to feel the scourge and desolation of the war. The hour that closes the armistice will bring ruin to most of them who live on this frontier. We have been daily amused for two months by news of heavy ordnance and flying artillery. They come as far as Utica and then disappear. This letter is written in a state of mind little short of distraction. Yesterday a number of men were shot at Fort George in view of our troops. They are supposed to be the unfortunate fellows who joined General Hull in Canada and were surrendered at Detroit, and for whose protection provision should have been made in the capitulation at the expense of the life of every man in the garrison. The public mind is wrought up almost to a pitch of madness. Jealousy and distrust begin to to prevail towards the general officers." John Lovell, private secretary of General Van Rensselaer, wrote about the same time to a friend: "Hull's surrender has cemented Canada beyond anything you can conceive. It has also a serious effect on the Indians along the whole frontier. The sensation produced by the sight of prisoners marched past is inexpressible."

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that when General Dearborn, having learned that his government had peremptorily declared to enter into fresh negotiations, and believing the rumor of the capture of Malden, instructed Van Rensselaer to terminate the armistice at once, that the latter exercised the discretionary power allowed him of prolonging it until the last of his artillery had arrived. But when the last division of boats hove in sight, and all the benefit that could be reasonably expected from its continuance had been secured, notice was given that it would end on the 8th of September.

Four hundred batteaux loaded with artillery and stores had come in from Oswego; great quantities of provisions had been collected; a large number of scows and boats suitable for the passage of the river had been built; several thousand additional troops had arrived and more were on the march, yet the American general hesitated to assume the offensive. The panic created by the surrender of Detroit had by that time reached Albany, and Dearborn wrote to warn him that an attack upon his position was imminent. British troops had been seen ascending the St. Lawrence, and he must be prepared to fall back if hard pushed and not be caught in a trap like Hull. The disembarkation of detachments of soldiers both at Fort Erie and Niagara, close upon the heels of this information, alarmed and perplexed them. Colonel Fenwick, commanding at Fort Niagara, reporting that an attack was expected by him, the stores were removed, the siege-guns buried, and every preparation made for the hasty evacuation of the post.

Stephen Van Rensselaer, who held chief command by virtue of his rank as Major-General of the New York state troops, was an utter novice in all military affairs and could scarcely even be termed an amateur soldier. The last *patroon* of Rensselaer-Wyck and the leading Federalist in the state, his appointment was a sharp stroke of party tactics on the part of the governor who discovered in him a prospective and dangerous opponent. The recent Congressional elections had seemed to indicate that the Federalists had regained the confidence of the people of New York, and most of their leaders were uncompromising in their hostility to the war. If Van Rensselaer accepted, his immediate following would be committed to its prosecution; if he refused, his conduct could be denounced as unpatriotic,

Five generations of the Van Rensselaers had reigned in the ancient manor-house near Albany, and their estates stretched along the Hudson from Barren Island to Cohoes, extending inland for twenty-five miles on either side of the river, and comprising a thousand square miles of territory. Under the Dutch governors they had assumed almost regal state, exacting oaths of allegiance from their tenants, and they still maintained many of their feudal customs giving perpetual leases, receiving the rents in dozens of fowls and bushels of wheat and personal

service, and holding regular quarter sales. In the Congressional district in which Albany was situated their influence was paramount, and members of the family represented it for twenty years. Stephen, the present head of the house, was an amiable and benevolent but rather dull man of about fifty years of age. On all strictly military subjects, he was compelled to rely upon the advice of his Adjutant-General and cousin, Solomon Van Rensselaer who had been bred a soldier, had served in the United States army for ten years, and had held his present appointment for as many more. He had been wounded in Wayne's campaign against the Indians, and possessed the reputation of a brave and skilful officer.

Remaining but a few hours at Niagara, the indefatigable Brock hurried on to Kingston where he inspected the militia, examined the growing fortifications and wrote to Sir George Prevost for permission to attack Sackett's Harbor, where the American shipping on Lake Ontario had taken refuge. With his present superiority upon the lake he assured him that its capture would be an easy matter. A portion of the American troops at Niagara would be probably recalled for its relief, and while they were marching overland he would sail up the lake and throw his whole force against the posts they had left. But to the governor this daring scheme of operation seemed far too hazardous, and in reply he desired Brock not to provoke the enemy by needless annoyance, but remain strictly on the defensive, and even hinted that he had risked too much when he ventured to cross the river at Detroit.

This plan having been rejected, Brock returned to Niagara where he found that Van Rensselaer had already given notice of the termination of the armistice. Lewiston Heights were whitened with the tents of a large encampment. Other camps were visible at Schlosser, Black Rock, and in rear of Fort Niagara. Batteries had been erected on the commanding ground opposite Fort George and at Lewiston, and armed with heavy guns. A large flotilla of boats, suitable for the transportation of troops, lay moored under the guns of the fort at the mouth of the river, and others had been taken up to Lewiston. Forty batteaux, each capable of carrying thirty men, were known to have been built in Tonawanda creek. Every day large bodies of men could be seen exercising and marching to and fro, attended by a numerous train of field artillery and detachments of cavalry. Everything pointed to an immediate attack, while Brock found himself at once greatly in want of officers, men, and artillery, and wrote to Prevost that he must have a thousand more regular soldiers to defend that frontier, and the latter replied, that not another man could be spared for Upper Canada under any circumstances. Without delay the British commander set to work to supply his lack of men and means with his wonted energy. Detachments of troops were ordered up from Kingston and down from Amherstburg. Batteries were built and mounted with cannon taken from the fortifications of Detroit. An extensive system of beacons was established stretching from the Sugar Loaf and Point Abino along the lake and river to Lundy's Lane and Queenston, and thence inland to Pelham Heights, by which the movements of the enemy could be instantaneously signalled over the entire peninsula by night or day. Two thousand captured muskets and the accoutrements of Hull's regular troops were distributed among the militia of the province. His tireless activity and watchfulness excited the admiration even of his enemies. "I send you Brock's seal," Lovett wrote to a friend, "with his appropriate motto; 'He who guards, never sleeps.'" Earthworks of some description were constructed on every commanding point along the river from Queenston to its mouth, and at any menacing movement of their troops, alarm guns were fired and horsemen galloped out in every direction.

Nor were the embarassments of the British general, from lack of clothing and ready money, less annoying and serious. A number of the wealthier inhabitants, who formed themselves into a company known as the "Queenston and Niagara Association," had at that critical moment in July, when the fate of the province hung in the balance, loaned him several thousand pounds of ready money which enabled him to equip his expedition for the relief of Malden. The contents of General Hull's military chest and ten thousand dollars sent him by the Governor-General had enabled him to satisfy the most pressing demands since. But the pay of his troops, both regulars and militia, was several months in arrears, and they were unable to obtain the most trifling article without paying cash for it. They were without tents or camp utensils of any description. Their clothing hung about them in tatters; their shoes were in holes; and they always suffered dreadfully from cold and wet, yet their patience and cheerfulness excited his warmest praise. With the exception of a few men from the militia who generally went to their homes and

afterwards rejoined their companies, there were scarcely any desertions.

On the other side of the river bodies of fresh troops were constantly arriving, but their militia was represented as being very much dissatisfied and extremely inefficient. Sickness prevailed in their camps and funerals were daily observed. Several men of the 6th United States Infantry deserted in a body and attempted to swim the river, six of whom perished in sight of both armies. Undeterred by the fate of his unfortunate comrades, another man of the same regiment plunged in next day and swam over amid a shower of bullets. Two companies that had arrived during the armistice, each consisting of sixty men, he said, had already been reduced one half by desertion.

By the middle of September, two companies of the Royal Newfoundland and six of the 49th regiment arrived from Kingston, and ninety men of the 41st came down from Detroit. These slender reinforements were ostentatiously paraded in view of the enemy as they arrived and marched from place to place with marked effect as we have already observed. Three hundred Indians had come in and two hundred more were promised, but Brock placed little dependance upon auxiliaries of such uncertain temperament. "They may serve to intimidate," he said, "but no effective service can be expected from this degenerate race" To Prevost he wrote that there was no doubt great discontent existed among the American forces, "and much might be done, but keeping in mind Your Excellency's instructions, and aware of the policy of permitting such a force to dwindle away by its own inefficient means, I do not contemplate any immediate attack." But to his brother a few days later he disclosed his real impatience at his forced inactivity. "My instructions oblige me to adopt defensive measures, and I have evinced greater forbearance than was ever practiced on any former occasion. It is thought that without aid of the sword, the American people may be brought to a due sense of their interests. I firmly believe that at this moment I could sweep everything before me from Fort Niagara to Buffalo, but my success would be transient."

In fact the arrival of his reinforcements had almost produced a panic in the American camp. Party strife raged among the officers with unabated fury. Porter and his friends styled the commanding general a traitor, while Soloman Van Rensselaer announced his intention of publishing Porter as "a poltroon, coward, and scoundrel" In this dilemma General Dearborn suggested that the Governor of the state should assumed supreme command himself and march thither with as large a force of militia as he could assemble, while he endeavored to draw off part of the British troops by a movement towards Montreal by way of Lake Champlain. Tompkins was too shrewd a politician to peril his reputation by such a step, but he displayed great vigor in pushing forward troops, and stores, and invested Van Rensselaer with authority to call out an almost unlimited number of militia from the neighboring counties. Dearborn at the same time dispatched regiment after regiment of regular troops to Van Rensselaer's assistance, while the secretary of war sent sailors to equip and man the boats and vessels at Buffalo, and was urging forward another army to recover Detroit. Two thousand men from Pennsylvania were at the same time ordered to march to the Niagara.

There long continued efforts to enlist the Indians residing in New York and Pennsylvania actively on their side now promised to be successful. Already in July Erastus Granger, the American Indian agent for the state of New York, held a council with the Senecas at Buffalo, during which he proposed that they should permit two hundred of their young men to join the American army. This they refused to do, but consented to send some of their chiefs to Grand river to dissuade the Indians from joining the British. In this mission they were unsuccessful, but Granger appears to have represented to his government that they were anxious to be employed themselves, for as early as the 27th of July, the secretary of war wrote to Dearborn, enclosing a letter to Granger, authorizing him to organize the warriors of the Six Nations conditionally. At this time it was quite impossible for him to know that any Indians had joined the British. About the middle of September Van Rensselaer held a grand council with the Tuscaroras, and advantage was craftily taken of the appearance of a British scouting party upon Grand Island, which was still the property of the Senecas, to excite alarm amongst them lest they should be deprived of these lands. They were induced to declare war formally, and Red Jacket pompously announced they would put 3000 warriors in the field. Several hundred Indians were also brought down from the Alleghany river and a great feast and war dance held in the streets of Buffalo. Almost at the instant that these events were taking place, the secretary again wrote to Dearborn:—"By letters received from Erastus Granger it appears that

the young men of the Six Nations can no longer be restrained, and that in case of refusal on the part of the United States to accept their services they would join the Indians under the British standard. Mr. Granger has therefore been authorized, after every attempt to secure their neutrality has failed, to employ them.' In singular contradiction to the statements contained in this letter stands a speech delivered at the ancient council ground of the Six Nations by sixteen chiefs, representing five tribes of the confederacy distributed as far west as Tonawanda, on the 29th of September. "Having been told repeatedly by your agents to remain neutral, we were very much surprised at the council held at Buffalo Creek, at being invited to take up the tomahawk. We are not unfriendly to the United States but are few in number, and can do but little, but are willing to do what we can, and if you say so we will go with your people to battle. We are anxious to know your wishes as soon as possible, because we are afraid some of our young men may disperse among distant tribes and be hostile to you." By the beginning of October it is certain that about 300 warriors joined Van Rensselaer's army, but they seemed to have sent some apologetic message to the allied tribes in the British service, for these assured Brock that they would not act against him with any spirit. "So I imagine," he observed with his accustomed shrewdness, "if we continue to show a bold front, but in the event of a disaster the love of plunder will prevail in a manner to be the most dreaded by the inhabitants of this country."

The American militia were constantly in the habit of stealing down to the river and firing at the British sentries, the batteries and private houses on the opposite bank, and excited an intense and almost ferocious feeling of hatred among the troops under Brock's command, but he had the satisfaction of being able to report at the end of two months of incessant annoyance and alarm, that his regulars had not been diminished by a single death at the hands of the enemy, nor by a solitary desertion, and that his entire force was in good health and spirits in spite of their privations. A letter from a spy, apparently residing near Fort Erie, to General Van Rensselaer, gives a very striking picture of the situation and feelings of the people at this time. "General Brock," he remarks, "has paid attention to every particular that can relate to the future resources of the province under his charge as well as to its immediate defence. The harvest has been got in tolerably well and greater preparation is made for sowing fall grain than ever before. The militia law is modified as much as possible to suit the circumstances of the people, and measures tsken to prevent them feeling the burden of the war. The women work in the fields, encouragement being given for that purpose. When Hull's proclamation appeared it had its effect, there being security promised for private property, and the people would willingly have submitted, but when it was found that private property was seized without compensation the public sentiment entirely changed. The success of General Brock established the general sentiment; he has since made the most of it, has become personally highly popular; in short, has taken every measure that a judicious officer will take in his circumstances for the security of the province. A determination now prevails among the people to defend the country."

No dread of impending disaster ever damped his spirits or abated his activity. Impressibly sanguine himself he possessed the rare faculty of imbuing all who came in contact with him with unbounded confidence in his abilities and respect for his character. To maintain his position in the force of the overwhelming numbers gathering in his front might at times have seemed well nigh hopeless, yet no sign of despondency ever appeared in his manner or conversation. His wonted sagacity was displayed in the selection of members of his military family. John McDonnell, the attorney-general of the province and M. P. P. for Glengarry, and James Givins, of the Indian department, a man thoroughly familiar with the language and customs of the Indians of the province, were appointed provincial aides-de-camp. Robert Nichol, a millionaire of Port Dover, who knew intimately every part of the country between the Niagara and Detroit and almost every man in it, was made assistant quartermaster-general.

When the assembly was prorogued an address to the people of the province had been prepared and signed by nearly the whole of the members, urging them to defend their country and pledging their aid and advice in the cause, and most of them had now taken the field in some capacity. Many of the surviving loyalists, too old and feeble to bear the fatigue of a campaign, tendered their services to perform garrison duty.

The weather had been extremely discouraging. July had been excessively hot and dry, but August brought floods of rain. Wheat sprouted in the fields after being reaped and much of the harvest was ruined.

September as a rule proved cool and pleasant, but October was ushered in by furious storms, and sudden changes of temperature which prevented most of the Indian corn from maturing, and blighted the lingering hopes of the farmers.

Besides several large scows for the transport of cannon, the Americans had begun to build three gun-boats at Black Rock, the destruction of which Brock frankly confessed he would have attempted had he not been restrained by his instructions. The Indians were strictly prohibited from crossing the river under any pretence, and were closely watched and guarded. A party which arrived from the west to visit Colonel Claus, bringing with them a bundle of scalps, were sharply rebuked and pledged not to offend in that way again These rigid precautions had the effect of diminishing the number of those with the army until it did not much exceed one hundred.

A variety of motives absolutely forced General Van Rensselaer to assume the offensive. During September six regiments of regular infantry, five of New York militia, a battalion of rifles and several batteries of artillery had joined his army. The Pennsylvania contingent had assembled at Meadville on the 20th, and was marching to Buffalo. Forage and provisions had already begun to grow scarce, and the autumn rains would undoubtedly increase the ravages of disease already frightfully prevalent among his militia. Dearborn strongly urged him to attempt the passage of the river, as he declared they must reckon upon obtaining possession of Upper Canada before the winter set in, assuring him at the same time that Hanison would invade the province by way of Detroit with six or seven thousand men, while another strong body of troops was already assembled at Sackett's Harbor, where a squadron was fitting out to contest possession of Lake Ontario, and he, in person, would threaten Montreal from Lake Champlain. The ultimate success of these operations he regarded as almost certain, but he warned him that much would depend on his movements on the Niagara. Monroe, Secretary of State, openly ascribed the inactivity of the armies in New York to the effects of disaffection, which he declared had paralyzed the efforts of the administration and rendered the measures of Congress inoperative. The militia now clamored loudly to be led against the enemy, and did not hesitate to accuse their commander of lukewarmness and cowardice, while some of their officers announced their intention of invading Canada without waiting for orders from him, yet a trifling incident served to indicate how little dependence was to be placed on their assistence. A sentinel near Schlossen was shot on his beat in the night by some unknown person, and an entire company instantly threw away their arms and took to their heels, never stopping till they had gained the main camp at Lewiston. Early in October he summoned a council of war, to which he invited General Smyth, who had just taken command of a brigade of regular troops at Buffalo; General Hall, of the New York militia, and the commandant of each regiment of United States troops. Smyth showed his contempt for the militia general under whom he was forced to serve by neglecting to attend or even to apologize for his absence. Van Rensselaer had intended to concentrate the whole of his regular troops near Fort Niagara and the militia at Lewiston, and attempt the passage of the river simultaneously at both places, but in consequence of Smyth's misconduct this scheme was abandoned and he determined to cross from the latter place, only as he felt satisfied that the forces he had already assembled then were amply sufficient for the purpose. Staff-officers, under one pretext and another, had visited the British lines and the result of their observations coupled with information received from his spies had made him pretty thoroughly acquainted with the members and composition of the forces opposed to him.

No doubt was entertained of at least partial success. He confidently anticipated being able to secure a foothold in Canada where he could establish his army in winter-quarters and prepare for an early campaign next year. More than eight thousand troops were assembled under his command of whom about half were regulars. Three hundred artillery and eight hundred regular infantry occupied Fort Niagara, and nine hundred regular soldiers and 2,270 New York militia were encamped near Lewiston. At Buffalo General Smyth had 1,650 regular troops, three hundred and eighty-six detached militia, two hundred and fifty sailors, and four hundred Indians besides the local militia. Part of the Pennsylvania brigade of two thousand men had also arrived. Many batteaux and flat-bottomed boats were in readiness at Black Rock, Tonawanda, and Gill's Creek above the Falls, and at Lewiston and Four Mile Creek below, and a sufficient number could be collected at any given point in a few hours to carry over a thousand men. His train of field artillery was large and well-equipped.

To resist this formidable army, Brock had fifteen companies of regular infantry, which may have mustered sixty rank and file each; two officers and thirty men of the Royal artillery, with five field guns; a troop of militia drivers, and a troop of Provincial Cavalry, besides the flank companies of the five Lincoln and two York battalions of militia. The fourteen flank companies probably did not average more than thirty-five officers and men each, or less than five hundred in all. The muster rolls of the five Lincoln battalions show a total of nearly two thousand men, but these were scattered over the twenty townships then composing the country, comprising the entire peninsula from Burlington Bay to the mouth of Grand river. Perhaps five hundred of these could be readily assembled at a few hours notice. Most of the Indians had dispersed to their hunting-grounds. The exigencies of the transport-service on the lakes had obliged the British general to send away the armed vessels which had formerly served the flank of his position, and to watch a frontier which practically extended from the Sugar Loaf on Lake Erie to Four Mile Creek on Lake Ontario, and to occupy the numerous posts and batteries between and maintain communication over a line of sixty miles, he had actually less than a thousand regular troops and six hundred militia, with a reserve of possibly six hundred militia and Indians Half of this force was scarcely adequate to garrison Fort George and the adjacent batteries, and a body of troops could hardly be marched from one end of his line to the other in less than two days. The concentration of large bodies of men near Fort Niagara and Buffalo, where great numbers of boats were collected, forced Brock to weaken his centre and strengthen his wings, anticipating that an attempt would be made to turn either flank and land troops a few miles in rear of the works protecting it. Four companies of the 49th, two of the Royal Newfoundland regiment, four of militia and a small detachment of Royal artillery, occupied Fort Erie, and a series of batteries extending as low as Frenchman's Creek; four companies of militia and one company of the 41st were posted along the river between that point and Chippawa; the flank companies of the 49th and two of the York militia held the batteries near Queenston; the earthworks at Brown's and Field's points were each guarded by a militia company, while the remaining companies of the 49th and Lincoln militia, and the field guns were quartered in and about Fort George. A chain of outposts and patrols maintained constant communication between all these posts, and the Indians were held in reserve in small parties several miles in rear. As the number of regular artillerymen was quite insufficient to work even the field-guns in their possession, a corps of volunteer gunners had been formed partly from the regular infantry and partly from the militia under Captains Kerby and Swayze.

The quality of these troops was unquestionably superior to that of any likely to be brought against them. The 41st contained a large proportion of young recruits, but was a fine body of men, and although the men of the 49th had been ten years in the country, drinking rum without bounds, they were still respectable and ardent. The flank companies of militia were generally composed of picked men and had attained a very creditable degree of discipline.

The successful result of an attack upon two small armed vessels at Fort Erie served to raise the spirts of Van Rensselaer's army in a remarkable degree, and was actually a serious blow to their opponent's wing to the extreme scarcity of provisons apart from the loss of the vessels. This occurred early on the morning of the 9 h October, and Brock arrived on the spot before sunset, but having apparently satisfied himself that no immediate attempt to cross the river was contemplated there, returned to Niagara next day. This hurried journey had the effect of fastening Van Rensselaer's movements, for a spy returned to his camp with information that Brock had left Niagara in great haste and was supposed to have gone to Detroit. Encouraged by this report, and feeling, as he expressed it, "That the national character is degraded and the disgrace will remain corroding the public feeling and spirit until another campaign, unless it be wiped away by a brilliant exploit in this," he determined to strike while the enthusiasm of his troops was at its heat over the recent exploit, and fixed the hour and place for crossing the river for three o'clock next morning at Queenston. The stream was there at its narrowest; a ferry had been established for years, and although the current was swift, the navigation was well ascertained and an indifferent oarsman could pull across in less than ten minutes. His artillery, superior in numbers and calibre, could cover the landing from the high ground above Lewiston, where batteries had already been thrown up.

Accordingly the regulars from Fort Niagara, and strong detachments from Buffalo, were ordered to join the main-body at Lewiston before midnight, and boats sufficient

to contain 500 men were secretly brought overland from Gill's Creek. A furious storm of wind and rain swept over his camp while the troops were drawn up in readiness to enter the boats, and the pilot of the expedition deserted in the darkness. In consequence the attack was postponed. The rain continued with unabated violence for twenty eight hours until the roads became almost impassible. Van Rensselaer then desired to wait a few days in the hope of reverting to his original plan, but the impatience of his troops seemed to be increased by their recent failure, and the pressure brought to bear upon him was too great to be withstood. His force was now still further increased by the arrival of three hundred and fifty regular soldiers under Lieut. Col. Chrystie at Four Mile Creek, east of Fort Niagara. The appearance of these boats and the detention of a large force near that place led Brock to believe that an attempt would be made to land to the westward of Niagara and prevented him from reinforcing the detachments at Queenston, and though he had become aware of the attempt to cross the river there, he regarded it simply as a feint to divert his attention from the true point of attack. The evident activity of the enemy near Buffalo at the same time restrained him from weakening the right of his extended line.

The river as it issues from the gorge at Queenston is barely six hundred feet in width, and flows at the rate of about four miles an hour. The cliffs which wall it in above are almost perpendicular, yet on the Canadian side, in many places, were so overgrown and almost concealed, by shrubs and trees, which struck their roots into the clefts and crannies of the rocks, as to make it possible for an ordinarily active man to climb up with little difficulty from the water's edge to the summit. A few hundred yards west of the landing stood the village, consisting of a stone barracks and about twenty scattered dwellings surrounded by gardens and orchards. The waggon-road leading from Niagara formed the principal street and wound up the heights beyond. Another road, commencing at the landing and crossing this at right angles, led to St. Davids, throwing off a branch which ascended the heights about a mile to westward, and finally united with the portage-road above. In the angle formed by the intersection of these two roads at the south-east corner of the village stood the large stone house of the Hon. Robert Hamilton with its walled courtyard and substantial out-buildings. The adjacent plain was dotted with many farmhouses near the roads, and the fields were generally enclosed by ordinary rail-fences diversified, near the foot of the heights by an occasional low stone wall. Half-way up the side of the mountain a small redan battery had been built with its angle fronting the river and armed with an eighteen-pounder, and at Brooman's Point, nearly a mile below, a twenty-four pound gun had been mounted *en bazbette* on a crescent shaped earthwork commanding, although at very long range, both landings, and the breadth of the river between. Capt. Williams with the light company of the 49th was stationed at the redan, and the grenadiers of the same regiment under Capt. James Dennis and Chisholm's company of the 2nd Yorks were quartered in the village. Outposts and sentries watched the river from the landing to Brooman's Point which was occupied by Capt. Samuel Hatt's company of the 5th Lincoln. The entire force of regulars and militia distributed about Queenston did not exceed two hundred men. Cameron's and Howard's companies of York militia lay at Brown's Point, three miles distant, but there were no other regular troops nearer than Fort George.

Fatigue duty and frequent alarms had begun to tell upon the health and spirits of the men, and at dark on the evening of the 11th Brock learned with concern that some men of the 49th had become insubordinate and even threatened the lives of their officers, but an inquiry showed that their misconduct was caused by drink, and they were liberated with a reprimand.

All that day and the next, parties of influence lined the opposite shore and fired incessantly at any living thing that met their eye on the Queenston side. The houses near the river were riddled by their fire, and even a boat bearing a flag of truce became a target for their bullets.

In a battery, named Fort Gray above the village of Lewiston, two eighteen-pounders were mounted with the intention of silencing the gun in the redan, and two mortars and the same number of six-pounders were planted on the bank of the river to cover the landing and drive the British out of Queenston. Chrystie's and Fenwick's regiments of regulars from Fort Niagara, and three militia battalions from Schlossen were marched to Lewiston by inland roads after dark on the evening of the 12th, and long before the appointed hour of three o'clock more than 4,000 men were assembled there without exciting attention. Twelve boats, each of which could carry thirty men, and two others having a capacity of eighty each, manned by veteran fishermen familiar with the river, were moored at the landing. The

night was intensely dark, rain was still falling gently, and the winds and the roaring of the river drowned the sound of their movements. Everything seemed to conspire to favor their enterprise.

Col. Van Rensselaer had originally been selected to command the advance-guard, but when Chrystie arrived, he stubbornly refused to waive his rank and it was then agreed that he should lead a column of three hundred regular troops, while Van Rensselaer headed an equal number of militia. The militia composing this detachment were accordingly chosen with great care from among the best drilled men, and by their commander at least, were believed to be superior to the United States troops in point of discipline. Forty picked men of the regular artillery conducted by Lieut. Gausevoort, all of whom had long been quartered at Fort Niagara and knew the river well, were selected to head the other column and were followed by four companies of the 13th United States infantry, which was regarded as one of the crack regiments of their army. Next in succession, Col. Fenwick and Major Mullany were to cross with 550 regulars, then an equal number of militia and so on in order until the entire division consisting of the 6th, 13th, and 23rd United States infantry, detachments of three regular artillery regiments, a battalion of volunteer riflemen, and the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th regiments of New York militia had been passed over. The artillerymen, well provided with matches and rammers to work the captured guns, and a detachment of engineers was detailed to fortify a position as soon as it was taken. The number of officers and men exceeded four thousand of whom at least fifteen hundred were regulars, and barring accidents, the whole force might be ferried over in seven trips. The two largest boats were also fitted with platforms on which a field-piece with its carriage could be loaded.

In less than a quarter of an hour from the time the boats pushed off, ten of them conveying three hundred men, reached the opposite shore at the exact spot selected for effecting a landing, quite unperceived by the sentries. Three others, among them the two largest, were carried down by the current, and of these only the smaller one succeeded in landing below, while the two others returned by command of Col. Chrystie to their own shore to make a fresh start. Most of those who had landed were regular troops, comprising the detachment of artillery and three entire companies of the 13th infantry, and having sent back the boats to bring over the next detachment, Van Rensselaer assumed the command in the absence of Chrystie, and attempted to form up his men before advancing further. Their presence was then for the first time discovered by a militia sentry, who was so agitated by the fact, that instead of firing his musket at once, he ran into the main guard to give the alarm. In a few minutes Captain Dennis advanced towards the landing with forty-six men of his own company and a few of the militia, and found the enemy still in much confusion. His first volley fell upon them, as it proved, with fatal precision. Van Rensselaer himself was struck down with six wounds, several company officers and a number of men were killed or disabled, and the entire body retired to the water's edge where they were partially sheltered by the steep bank.

The batteries at Lewiston, where the gunners had been waiting with matches burning for the signal, instantly opened fire, the first round from their heavy guns being aimed at the redan, but when the glare of the musketry disclosed the position of a small body of British infantry near the landing, all six guns were turned upon it, and Dennis drew his men back under the shelter of the houses of the village. In this brief encounter the loss of the Americans was subsequently stated to have been eight officers and forty-five men killed or wounded.

The gunners in the redan and at Brooman's Point began firing at random in the direction of the Lewiston landing, in the hope of striking some of the boats, and Lieut. Crowther of the 41st, brought up a tiny three-pounder field-piece or grasshopper to sweep the road to the river. Van Rensselaer, being quite disabled by his wounds, was taken back to Lewiston, and the command devolved upon Capt. John E. Wool, of the 13th, a brave but young and inexperienced officer, who for more than two hours seems to have been quite satisfied to retain his foothold beside the river, while the batteries behind him were fast wrecking the village of Queenston. His men, however, maintained a brisk but harmless fire from the shelter of the bank. Reinforcements were pushed over to his assistance, but misfortune still attended them. Two boats loaded with men were swept far out of their course by the current. One of these, commanded by Lieut. Col. Fenwick of the artillery, struggled ashore in the cove below Queenston and attempted to ascend the bank there. They were at once attacked; Fenwick received a pistol-shot in the face which partially blinded him, besides two other wounds, and was taken prisoner with

most of his men. The other boat drifted fairly within range of Brooman's battery and was taken there. The river being so narrow many objects could be distingushed upon the opposite shore when lit up by the flashing of the artillery, and the shouts and shrieks of the combatants could be occasionally heard by thousands of interested spectators at Lewiston. Within half an hour after landing Wool's force was doubled by the arrival of two other companies of the 13th, forty artillerymen under Lieut. Randolph, and a detachment of militia, and all the wounded men were removed, but no officer of superior rank came to assume command.

The gun in the redan continued to throw shells at hazard into the river with little result beyond making the enemy's troops reluctant to enter the boats, although an officer is said to have been killed at Lewiston by one of them, and the darkness and distance rendered the twenty-four-pounder at Brooman's quite ineffective. On the other hand, round shot from the Lewiston batteries soon reduced Hamilton's house to a mere heap of ruins, and drove Crowther's toy gun out of range, while the mortars pitched their shells into the village, and their field-pieces searched the gardens and orchards with grape. The movements of the remainder of their troops continued, however, to be remarkably dilatory. The arrival of the wounded perhaps had something to do with this, and the march of a considerable body of militia was arrested by the sudden illness of their commanding officer At all events, boats remained lying idle on both shores.

Being convinced by unmistakeable signs that an attack was meditated within a day or two, Brock had been engaged till midnight in despatching orders for the assembly of the militia. It was no surprise then for him to be aroused shortly after ten o'clock by the distant boom of artillery up the river. He rose at once, but still adhering to his opinion that the true attack would not be there, he remarked that it was only a war between the sentries. The steady cannonade and blazing beacons along the heights convinced him at length that this was something more serious, and he mounted his horse and rode out of the gate just as a dragoon galloped up to announce that the enemy had landed at Queenston. As it was not uncertain whether another landing was not intended in the vicinity of Niagara, the British general contented himself with giving instructions for Captain Holcroft to follow him with two guns and a party of Indians, while the remainder of the garrison remained under arms in readiness to act in any direction until daylight more fully disclosed the designs of the enemy, and then set off at full speed, accompanied only by Captain Glegg and Lieut.-Col. McDonnell. At Field's and Brown's Point he paused for an instant to direct the militia companies quartered there to follow him, leaving behind only a sufficient number of men to man the batteries at each place.

Day dawned grey and chill with a thin fog rising from the river. Four boats filled with men were then seen to push off Lewiston, and at the same instant the head of a column of troops appeared above the bank at the Queenston landing. Dennis hastily called down the light company by sound of the bugle from the heights to his support, and concentrated his fire on this force, which very soon retired again under cover of the bank, where their movements were almost entirely screened from view, although they had lost a few men by the random fire of the light company during the morning.

Observing that the battery on the heights was now occupied only by a few men working the gun, Lieut. Gausevoort pointed out a narrow fisherman's path leading around a rocky point and winding upwards to the summit, and suggested that a detachment might gain the rear of the British position unobserved by this route. Although already bleeding from more than one wound, Wool eagerly adopted the proposal which had also been favored by Van Rensselaer, and leaving a hundred men to occupy the landing and engage the attention of the British in that quarter, he instanly began the ascent at the head of the remainder, giving strict orders to an officer to shoot any man who attempted to turn back.

At this instant Brock rode into the village splashed with mud from head to foot. He was at once recognized and welcomed with a hearty cheer by the men of the 49th, in which regiment he had risen from subalteran to colonel. Reining in his horse for a moment to acknowledge their salute, he rode up the slope to the redan and there dismounted.

A striking scene presented itself to his gaze. A single glanced showed him battalion upon battalion of troops drawn up in rear of the American batteries in readiness to embark; other detachments were entering their boats, some already upon the river, and an uncertain number in possession of the Queenston landing. Their guns were pouring round and grape shot into the enclosures of the village where Dennis still contrived to maintain a foot-

hold, and an occasional shell from their mortar battery rose shrieking into the air. So far everything seemed to promise well. The party that had landed had not gained an inch of ground in three hours, and near a hundred prisoners had been taken with small loss.

Watching intently the flight of a shell from the gun beside him, he observed that it burst prematurely, and turning to the gunner, Brock advised him to try a larger fuse. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a loud shout rose from the hillside above, accompanied by a volley of bullets whistling overhead, and a body of the enemy came charging down upon the rear of the battery. Resistance was out of the question, and there was no time even to mount, so leading their horses by the bridle the three officers ran hastily down the road to the village followed by the dozen men working the gun, who fortunately had sufficient presence of mind to spike it before they came away.

All this was plainly visibly to the troops at Lewiston, whose shouts could be heard amid the roar of the cannon as their flag rose over the battery, and they pressed down eagerly to the boats. It was now evident that the principal and probably the only attack was to be made here, and Brock despatched a hurried message to Sheaffe at Fort George to turn every gun that would bear upon the American batteries opposite, and send forward the battalion companies of the 41st and flank companies of militia. Then mounting his horse he rode at a gallop to the farther end of the village, where the light company of the 49th was drawn up in line awaiting orders. Again he was received with a loud cheer, and wheeling his horse in the direction of the heights, he exclaimed, "Follow me, boys," and led them at a run to the foot of the ascent. There he paused and dismounted, saying: "Take breath, boys—you will need it in a few moments," a significant announcement, which provoked another hearty shout.

The crest of the heights was densely wooded in most places, and their sides dotted with clumps of small trees and shrubs richly spangled with the crimson, russet and golden tints of autumn. These thickets in combination with the natural inequality of the ground furnished excellent cover for the American riflemen. The redan was occupied by the main body of their troops, but they were unable to make any use of the captured gun. Freshly landed men were already ascending to their assistance, and the mortar battery had begun to throw shells in the direction of Brock's party in the hope of checking its advance.

Convinced of the great importance of regaining the lost position before the enemy was heavily reinforced, he ordered Dennis to join him with the 49th grenadiers and Chisholm's company of York militia, leaving only a few men in the village to hold them in check in that quarter. When their companies came up he detached Williams with a section of his own company and the whole of the militia, making about seventy men in all, by a round about route to turn the left of Wool's position. Observing this movement, the latter detached a party of 150 men to check it, but after a brief interchange of shots, the Americans fell into confusion and began to retire. Seizing the favorable moment, Brock sprang over the stone wall behind which he had directed his men to take shelter, and led the way directly up the steep ascent towards the battery, waving his sword and shouting to the grenadiers, who followed him with a ready cheer.

The rain had ceased and strong gleams of sunshine broke through the clouds. The ground was thickly strewn with fallen leaves slippery with wet, and yielding treacherously, and as men stumbled and fell here and there the line was soon broken. Wool sent a reinforcement to support his advance party and their fire soon began to tell. "This is the first time I have ever seen the 49th turn their backs!" Brock exclaimed angrily as he noticed men dropping to the rear, and the ranks promptly closed up. McDonnell brought up the companies of Cameron and Hervard which had just arrived from Brown's Point much exhausted, having run nearly all the way. The force then engaged in the direct assault of the heights including these companies numbered about one hundred and ninety men. The flank companies were uniformed in scarlet and advanced with such steadiness, that Wool was led to believe that he was being attacked by four companies of the 49th. His own command had been increased to about five hundred rank and file two-thirds of whom were regular soldiers, yet notwithstanding their advantage in numbers and position, being at the same time pressed warmly on the flank by William's detachment, they began to shrink from the contest.

Seeing that the supports were lagging at the foot of the hill Brock shouted to McDonnell to "push on the York volunteers." A bullet struck the wrist of his sword-arm inflicting a slight wound, to which he paid no attention but continued to wave his sword and encourage his men. His tall and

portly figure and energetic gestures, as well as his uniform and position several yards in front of the line, naturally made him a special target for the bullets of the enemy although he does not seem to have been personally recognized by them. At last a rifleman, said to be one Wilklow of Moseley's battalion, stepped out of a thicket less than fifty yards away and took deliberate aim at him. More than one man of the 49th observed this and fired hastily in the hope of anticipating his shot, but without effect. The fatal bullet struck their general in the breast very near the heart, and he sunk slowly to the ground and expired after murmuring a few broken sentences to those nearest him to conceal his death from the men and continue the fight.

McDonnell spurred his horse sharply to the front and called upon the grenadiers to avenge their leader's death. William's at the same moment led forward his detachment from the thickets on the right and the combined force charged at once fiercely upon the front and flank of the enemy who were already in disorder and huddled together about the battery, out of which they were quickly expelled and driven obliquely upwards towards the summit of the heights in the direction of the river. Being hotly pursued, an officer even raised a handkerchief or white cloth on the point of his sword as a flag of truce, but this was quickly snatched away from him by Wool, who by great exertions succeeded in persuading his men to make a stand on the very verge of the cliff. A body of fresh troops including an entire company of the 6th U. S. infantry, and another of rifles opportunely came to his assistance at this critical moment and enabled him to prolong his line until he outflanked his assailants in both directions. They had also fallen into much disorder through the haste and impetuosity of their advance. Williams had been disabled by a ghastly wound in the head, Dennis had been badly hurt, and a considerable number of men killed or wounded. McDonnell had as yet escaped unharmed, although being the only mounted officer present, he naturally attracted the fire of the enemy by whom he was supposed at the time to be the British general, and his hat and clothes were pierced in many places. But now while attempting to restore order and form the men for a fresh attack, his horse was struck by a shot, and as the animal plunged in agony, his rider also received a mortal wound and was thrown from the saddle. In spite of the efforts of Dennis and other officers, the British then gave way in turn and retreated to the foot of the heights carrying with them, however, the dead body of their general and most of the wounded. They were not vigorously pursued and did not lose more than a dozen prisoners, most of whom were too badly injured to be removed. Dennis refused to quit the field and succeeded in collecting most of his men at the farther end of the village which was still occupied by Lieut. Crowther with a squad of Provincial artillerymen in charge of two small guns.

The result of this engagement had a very inspirating influence upon the troops at Lewiston, numbers of whom instantly professed great eagerness to cross the river and share the glory of the day. They still possessed a sufficient number of boats to carry over the remainder of the division before ten o'clock; the passage of the river was now for some time entirely unopposed, and why they did not make better use of their opportunities has never been satisfactorily explained. As it was, considerable bodies, both of regular troops and militia were brought over, with a six-pound field-piece, its carriage and tumbril. General Van Rensselaer and Colonel Chrystie examined the position on the heights and gave directions for its immediate fortification. Engineer officers were set at work and fieldworks commenced. The gun in the redan was unspiked and brought to bear on the village. Colonel Winfield Scott, the future conqueror of Mexico, having arrived from Buffalo during the morning with a battery of artillery, placed his guns in position at Lewiston and crossed the river to take command of the regular troops at Queenston, who were re-enforced by detachments of the 6th and 23rd U. S. infantry and 2nd and 3rd artillery. About the same time Brigadier-General James Wadsworth assumed command of the militia brigade, consisting of portions of Allen's, Bloom's, Mead's and Stranahan's regiments, and Moseley's battalion of riflemen. The precise number of men belonging to these corps that passed the river it is impossible to ascertain. Estimates by their own officers ranged from one thousand to sixteen hundred. Some companies of militia were represented by officers without men; others by men without officers, while a few were almost or quite complete.

The sound of a heavy cannonade at the mouth of the river excited the worst apprehensions in the minds of the little band that continued to occupy Queenston village, until they were relieved by the arrival of Captain Derenzy, with several companies of the 41st and militia, a detachment of Royal Artillery with two field-guns under Captain

Holcroft, and a party of Indians led by Captain John Norton and Lieut. John Brant. Stragglers from the field, whom they encountered on the road, reported that Dennis' entire command had been cut to pieces, and that five thousand men had landed. Accordingly they had advanced much of the distance at the double, and when they reached Queenston, were out of breath and quite exhausted. Under these circumstances it would have been folly to attempt the recovery of the heights, where the numbers of the enemy could have been seen momentarily increasing, but Holcroft planted his guns on the high ground below the village, and endeavored to interrupt the passage of the river.

Small parties of the enemy had entered the upper part of the village, where they had plundered some of the houses, but they had made no effort to occupy it in force. After a few shots, finding that his pieces were too far away to reach their boats, Holcrof, again limbered up, and guided by Captain Archibald Hamilton, to whom every inch of ground was familiar from boyhood, dashed boldly across the ravine and through the village until he reached Hamilton's house, where he took up a position within the courtyard partly sheltered by the ruins of the wall. Derenzy at once supported him with a company of the 41st, and there his fire soon became effective, although he lost several of his best men. A few case-shot drove away the enemy's riflemen, and he then engaged the batteries opposite, firing also when an opportunity offered at boats on the river. The battery on Lewiston was still out of range, but the guns at the landing were three times silenced, and a scow, and at least two other boats, sunk in the act of crossing. Such was the precision of his fire, that from that time forward very few men attempted to pass the river.

In the meantime Scott had thrown out pickets to the edge of the woods on the left of his position, and the Indians were detached in that direction to engage them and annoy their working parties. This was accomplished in fine style, as their approach through the woods was undetected, and the outposts were surprised and completely routed with considerable loss. A large body of infantry then advanced to repel them, and the Indians instantly ran to the woods again, whence they kept up an incessant fire, accompanied with shrill whoops. The suddenness of the attack and the character of the assailants produced a genuine panic, which extended itself even to Lewiston, where a militia company on the point of entering the boats abruptly halted and refused to move. Norton continued to skirmish with, and annoy their outposts, and although several times attacked, always eluded his antagonists by plunging into the woods, where they dared not follow. Numbers of the American militia deserted their companies, and attempted to regain their own shore, and thenceforth their force continued to diminish. Besides the serious annoyance and loss inflicted upon the enemy by this movement, direct communication was again opened with the garrison at Chippawa.

Upon reaching Queenston Derenzy had at once sent a message to General Sheaffe, describing the situation of affairs, and the latter soon afterward arrived and assumed command. He lost no time in ordering every man that could be spared from the garrisons of Fort George and Chippawa, to join him without delay. By two o'clock the detachments from the former post had all arrived, leaving it occupied only by a few men of the Royal Artillery and the Lincoln militia, and those from Chippawa were known to be rapidly approaching. The force already assembled consisted of Holcroft's detachment of Royal Artillery with two six-pounders, a squad of Swayze's provincial artillery with two three pounders, under Lieut. Crowther, five companies of the 41st regiment, Capt. James Crookes' and John McEwen's companies of the 1st Lincoln, William Crookes' and Nelles' companies of the 4th Lincoln, Applegarth's, Hatts' and Durands' companies of the 5th Lincoln, a few troopers of Merritt's provincial dragoons, and the remnants of the two companies of the 49th and three of York militia, engaged in the morning, probably numbering in all rather more than 800 of all ranks, exclusive of the Indians, who certainly did not exceed one hundred.

As the enemy's force appeared to be still considerably more numerous than his own, and they were busily engaged in fortifying their position in evident anticipation of another direct attack from below, the British commander determined to heave Holcroft's two guns supported by a detachment of infantry to occupy the village, and prevent the passage of reinforcements, while, with the remainder of his troops, he moved around their flank, ascending the heights in rear of the woods already occupied by the Indians, and formed a junction with the column advancing from Chippawa, which would increase his numerical strength by 150 men. In this way he would at once escape the enfilading fire of the batteries at Lewiston, avoid the steep ascent in the face of the enemy, render their fieldworks use-

less, and place his men on an equal footing with them on the open and level ground above.

The Indians redoubled their activity as the column approached, keeping however, well under cover, and thoroughly succeeded in obviating any attempt to harass its advance. Within an hour Sheaffe gained the cleared ground on the right of the woods occupied by them, extending as far as the portage road, where he beheld Captain Richard Bullock advancing from Chippawa with his own company of the 41st, and Captain Robert Hamilton's and Jno. Rowe's companies of the 2nd Lincoln, strengthened for the occasion like most others, by a number of volunteers from the ranks of the sedentary militia. Foremost among other aged men properly exempt from service, whom the emergency had impelled to seize their arms, again was Lieut.-Col. Ralfe Clench, once an officer in Butler's rangers, and then the district judge, who had retired from command of the 1st Lincoln battalion a few years before owing to infirmity.

The combined force, numbering about 930 officers and men, was formed for the attack with the light company of the 41st, under Lieut. McIntyre, and the two companies of the 49th, still commanded by the dauntless Dennis, on the left of the line next the Indians, supported by a small battalion of militia under Lieut.-Col. Butler. The centre and right wing were composed of the five remaining companies of the 41st, having in support the rest of the militia under Lieut.-Col. Thomas Clarke. The two small field-pieces, drawn by men with drag-ropes, preceded the advance of the line, which was necessarily deliberate.

The number of combatants actually arrayed against them at that moment cannot be exactly stated, but could hardly have been less than nine hundred, of whom more than half were regulars. Like the British, this force was made up of detachments from many different battalions. Its ranks had been much diminished by desertions since the Indians had renewed the fight, numbers of men stealing down to the river and lurking there in the hope of finding means of escape. Perceiving that Sheaffe was preparing for a decisive attack upon his position, and probably having no desire to grace his triumph as a prisoner, General Van Rensselaer determined to return to Lewistop, with the lingering hope of enlisting a reinforcement from the large body of militia still congregated there. He had scarcely entered his boat, when the skulkers at the landing crowded into it in such numbers, that it was in actual danger of being swamped by their weight, and pushed off heedless alike of his threats and entreaties.

His departure left Colonel Scott in command, having under him Colonel Chrystie and Brigadier-General Wadsworth. Sheaffe's movements obliged him to abandon his uncompleted fieldworks, and take up a new position on the crown of the heights, where a slight barricade was hastily extemporized with fence-rails, logs and brushwood, with the left flank resting on the edge of the cliff, and the riflemen on the other, facing the Indians from among the brush-huts, formerly occupied by the 49th light company. The gun in the redan could not be made to bear in this direction, and his solitary field-piece was therefore planted in front of the centre of the line, near the site of the present monument.

While waiting the attack, Scott received a message from Van Rensselaer, stating that he had been unable to induce a single regiment, or even a company to advance to his relief, but forwarding a supply of ammunition and assuring him, that if he felt unable to maintain his position, boats would be sent to remove the troops, and the artillery would cover his retreat. Upon Van Rensselaer's arrival on his own shore he found a few men at the landing, whom he sent over, and then accompanied by members of his staff and "old Judge Peck," grotesquely equipped for war in a huge cocked hat and long sword, rode through the cantonments, exhorting the groups of lounging soldiers they met there on every hand, to make an effort to rescue their comrades from their perilous situation, but without producing the slightest effect.

Scott's men were already profoundly discouraged at being called upon to fight another action, and evinced an alarming disposition to stray away from their ranks, which he endeavored to check by instructing the sergeants to shoot those who should attempt to leave their post without orders.

The contest was began by the advance of the light company of the 41st, which fired a single volley, and then charged with fixed bayonets upon the riflemen on the right of the American line, who, being unprovided with weapons to resist this form of attack, gave way in great confusion, leaving that flank exposed. On witnessing the success of this movement, Sheaffe gave the signal for a general advance. The gun was taken and the position carried almost without resistance, and the entire body of American troops forced steadily back upon the river, the British line by the advance of the wings having gradually assumed the form of a crescent, overlapping them on both flanks.

Some of the fugitives braving the fire of the guns in the village, ran down the hill towards the landing; Scott, himself, and a number of others scrambled down the steep bank to the water's edge, in the hope of finding the promised boats; Wadsworth and Chrystie, with more than five hundred officers and men, surrendered on the verge of the cliff.

Meanwhile the fire of Holcroft's artillery had rendered the passage of the river so dangerous, that the boatmen positively refused to undertake it, and dispersed. As no boats were waiting to receive them, a few desperate men plunged into the river and attempted to swim across, of whom some perished; the remainder tried to secrete themselves among the rocks and thickets along the shore. The Indians lined the cliffs above, or perched themselves in the trees whooping incessantly, and firing at the fugitives whenever an opportunity offered. Under these circumstances Scott was glad to raise a white flag in the hope of preserving the lives of the rest of his command. For a few minutes, even after this was done, the Indians continued their firing either not observing or disregarding this token of submission, until it is said that Sheaffe grew so indignant at their misconduct, that he dashed his hat and sword on the ground, and threatened that he would resign the command if they were not at once restrained. When this was accomplished, 290 officers and men surrendered there. Some yet evaded discovery, and forty were brought in next day, swelling the entire number of prisoners taken to an aggregate of 958, among whom there was one general, six colonels, three majors, seventeen captains and thirty-six subalterns.

The loss in killed and wounded cannot be exactly stated on either side. The British official return is missing, but is said to have footed up a total of only sixteen killed and sixty-nine wounded. It is doubtful whether the casualties among the militia were included in this. Two Cayuga chiefs and three warriors, whose names have been preserved were killed, and Norton himself and eight others wounded, although this loss was insignificant in point of number. The death of Gen. Brock was felt to be an almost irreparable blow, and by many of his opponents was considered to have fully compensated for their defeat. Besides him, Lieut-Col. McDonnell seems to have been the only British officer killed, and none but Captains Dennis and Williams appear to have been wounded.

No complete return of casualties was attempted by the Americans, probably owing to the immediate dispersal of a large portion of the militia. A week after the battle, Van Rensselaer stated officially that it would be impossible to furnish a complete statement, but estimated the number of killed at sixty, and of wounded at one hundred and seventy. It was but natural that he should be disposed to minimize his losses, and accordingly we find others inclined to believe them very much greater. Lossing and J. L. Thomson, neither of whom would be prone to exaggeration in this respect, agree in placing the number of killed at ninety, but diminish the number of wounded. Contemporary accounts generally put both still higher. Colonel Mead, a prisoner, estimated the killed and drowned at one hundred, and the wounded at twice that number, while Colonel Bloom, who was wounded but escaped capture, thought that a hundred were drowned alone, and three hundred killed and wounded. An eye witness whose letter was published in the Boston *Messenger* stated that 1600 Americans were engaged, of whom 900 were regulars, and that the number of killed was variously estimated from 150 up to 400. A letter in the Ontario *Repository*, also from an eyewitness, computed the killed and missing at 250, while still another in the Geneva *Gazette* raised the number to 300. But a British officer writing from Fort George on the 17th of October, fairly distanced all others by the conjecture, that 500 of their men must have perished in the action, or in the river, relating in support of his opinion that one boat was seen to sink with about fifty men, while two others, each having as many on board, did not bring more than half a dozen ashore alive in either of them.

There can be no doubt that their loss was severe. A single company of the 13th, lost thirty men in killed or wounded, and four out of the five captains of that regiment engaged, were disabled by wounds. Three captains and three subalterns were killed, and besides those who were taken prisoners, two colonels, four captains, and five subalterns were wounded. There were one hundred and twenty wounded officers and men among the prisoners, thirty of whom died. The hospital at Niagara was filled, and the remainder laid in the courthouse and churches. One hundred and forty others had been removed before the surrender to Lewiston, and of these, not less than one hundred are related to have been buried within a month, many of them dying from flesh wounds through insufficient care.

Van Rensselaer's failure was complete and disastrous. He had lost all his best

officers,and the flowers of his troops, and the entire division engaged was practically rendered incapable of resuming operations in the field. Ten days afterward he abandoned the struggle in despair, by throwing up the command. His successor, General Smyth, reported that he found his force diminished by more than two thousand men in consequence of the defeat, half this loss having been caused by desertion Several of the militia regiments had to be actually disbanded in consequence, and the men still remaining in camp allowed to return to their homes. A letter written from Manlius, N. Y., on the 3rd of November, contains the dismal account "that the militia corps on the lines have dwindled, and are dwindling to mere skeletons, some of the companies containing a less number of privates than officers. The rifle corps from this county is reduced by sickness, prisoners, etc., to less than the complement of a company, and Major Moseley in consequence has returned home."

Besides the field-piece already mentioned, and about a thousand stand of small arms, the colors of one of the New York regiments were taken. In November this trophy was displayed in the courtyard of the castle of St. Louis at Quebec, and is thus described by the *Mercury* :—"It is made of blue or purple-colored changeable silk about a yard and a half square, with the arms of the United States on one side and those of New York on the other, both surrounded by a circle of stars."

NOTE.—The companies of Rowe and Hamilton engaged in this battle, being the flank companies of the 2nd Lincoln battalion, were formed from among the residents of the townships of Stamford, Thorold and Willoughby. The following copy of the original muster-rolls of these companies will not be devoid of interests to many of the present inhabitants of this county :—

"We the non-commissioned officers and privates belonging to Captain John Rowe's company of the second regiment of Lincoln militia do sincerely promise and swear that we will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty, King George, and him will defend to the utmost of our power, against all traitorous conspiracies and attempts, whatsoever, which shall be made against His Person, Crown, or Dignity, and we will do our utmost endeavours to disclose, and make known to His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies, or attempts which we shall know to be against him or them. So help us God.

William Silverthorn,	John Kalar,
Stephen Peer,	John Sutton,
William Coan,	Benjamin Sutton,
Stephen Barber,	Colin McCallum,
Jonathan Conklin,	Aaron Sutton,
Wareham Johnson,	Hugh Hagerty,
William Biggar,	Conrad Sider,
Ebenezer Skinner,	James Baird,
John Pearson,	Edward Durham,
Jonah Hovey,	James Thompson,
Isaac Hovey.	

Sworn before me at Chippawa, 4th Sept., 1812, Thomas Dickson, J. P.

CAPT. ROBERT HAMILTON'S COMPANY.

William Rawles,	William Snart,
Harman Pruyn,	James Ostrander,
Martin Anderson,	Adam Bowman,
Paul Weaver,	John Dorshimer,
Frederick Near,	Thomas Bloomfield,
Gabriel Smith,	Philip Bettes,
Robert Frelick,	A Upper, Lieut.,
Thomas Bald,	Joshua Robins,
Charles Anderson,	Adam Dennis,
Jacob Schram.	

Sworn before Thomas Cummings, J. P., 6th of October, 1812.

Daniel Davis,	Elijah Johnson,
Thomas Cain,	John Camplin,
Reuben Green,	Henry Stammack,
Francis Pettas,	Arthur McIntosh,
Peter Bastedo,	Antoine Elmetter,
Benjamin Babcock,	Louis Blanchette,
John Gallopain,	William Gilmore,
Willian Agler,	Caleb Hopkins,
Robert Hopkins,	Este Mack,
Richard Griffith,	John Thomas,
Henry Millar,	Dongald McLachlan,
Christian Mester,	Job M. Layton,
James Slaght.	Phineas Moulton.

Sworn on the 29th of August, 1812.

Robert Watterhouse,	Darius Williams,
Thomas Fortin,	H. Vanalstine,
William Thomas,	C. Vanderburg,
Andrew Neville,	Phineas Smith,
Jonathan Doan,	Frederick Glans,
Adam Killman,	Thomas Lodge,
John Williams,	Perry Loucks,
John Lutz,	George Bill.
Robert Willson,	Gilbert VanWyck,
Abraham Teaters,	B. Humphreys,
Moses Gilmore,	John Bowman,
Cornelius Johnson,	Calvin Cook,
James Ryan,	John Howell,
Jacob Vanderburgh,	James E. Wood,
John Christler,	Alvin Silverthorn,
John Scott,	James Scott,
Andrew Willson,	Peter Bowman,
Mathias Gruvick,	Nathan Arnold,
George Marlatt,	John Morrison,
Loyal Davis,	David Pierson,
John Kelly,	John Skinner,
Obadiah Swayze.	Peter B. Dewitt,
Hiram Swayze,	

Sworn on the 4th of Sept., 1812.

John Carl,	John Smith.

Sworn on the 12th Oct., 1812.

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